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THE CHUKCHI OF NORTHEASTERN ASIA

By WALDEMAR BOGORAS

Early history.—On some maps of the eighteenth century the country east of Chaun river and south of the Anadyr is not included in Asiatic Russia proper. This country, called Chukotskaya Zemlitsa ("Small Land of Chukchi") in old Siberian documents, was inhabited, according to the cartographers of the period, by a very fierce and warlike people who, when captured, took their own lives. The name of this people is Chukchi, and the correctness of the description is confirmed by the history of their relations with the Russians as well as by their present character.

Hostility between the Chukchi and the Russians began with their first contact in the middle of the seventeenth century. The Cossacks, who came from Kolyma and who in their contests with the Lamut, Yukagir, and Chuvanzi had been accustomed to easy victories and often to bloodless submission, met with most obdurate resistance; this was the more surprising as the people offering it had no social organization, but with remarkable unanimity of purpose followed the lead of their most experienced warriors.

In this struggle the Cossacks, despite the valor and wariness of their last leader, Major Pavlutsky, were finally utterly defeated. The Russians, in 1774, by orders of the government, destroyed one of their own outposts, Fort Anadyr, the supplies being sent to Kolymsk and Gishynginsk. Russian and Chukchi traditions abound in vivid pictures of this conflict, although naturally differing in their points of view. In the Russian account Pavlutsky was defeated because some of his followers, exhausted by the hardships of the campaign, did not appear in time to support him in the decisive battle. The leader of this force was one

Krivogornitzyn, and his last descendant, Mitrophan Krivogornitzyn, a blind beggar, lives in the village of Pokhodsk at the mouth of Kolyma river. I was there told by some old men that his sad fate was in punishment for the treachery of his forefather.

After repeatedly defeating the Cossacks, the Chukchi went to the Kolyma in baydaras and devastated the Russian villages. One of these settlements now bears the name Pogromnoye, from *pogrom*, "devastation"; while another is called Douvannoje, from *douvanit*, "to divide booty."

According to Chukchi tradition, Pavlutsky and his companions treated the inhabitants with incredible cruelty. They destroyed the entire population, cleaving men with axes and tearing women into halves by the feet; they drove away the reindeer herds or butchered them for food for their dogs, and carried off everything on which they could lay hands. The Chukchi camps nearest to the Russians were deserted, and the inhabitants, fleeing eastward, had decided to cross to America when the defeat of Pavlutsky changed the entire aspect of affairs.

Chukchi tradition likewise alludes to treason, but names as the traitor the son of the Chuvan woman with whom Pavlutsky lived. He was reared by his stepfather, but was secretly in communication with the Chukchi. The capture and horrible death of Pavlutsky are dramatically described. I will give only the close of the story from my collection of Chukchi folklore. There are several accounts of the final defeat of Pavlutsky, who is called Yakoúnnin, a name probably derived from Jacob, although the Christian name of Pavlutsky was Theodore. Even today many Russians assume names quite different from their Christian names. The reason for this custom is not given, but it is probably due to a desire to conceal their real names from sorcerers and other evil-doers. Following is the Chukchi account:

"Yakoúnnin, you bad one, murderer!"—said the people to the captive; "we have no iron axes with which to cleave you as you have done our people, but we will in some way make you feel the pain of death!"

They stripped him of his armor and put on his head a reindeer bridle, with a long strap, and made him run with bare feet in a circle through the snow. When he grew tired they lashed him with reindeer-whips, every stroke drawing blood. Now, Yakoúnnin, the wicked murderer, was exhausted; his back was sorely lacerated and his tongue lolled. They brutally dragged him on until he fell, when they again lashed him with whips like women beating a tent cover. Yakoúnnin sprang to his feet and again ran in a circle, his tongue hanging to his navel. Again he fell, and could rise no more. Then they made a huge fire and roasted him alive. His flesh was cut off in thin slices, but the roasting was continued until Yakoúnnin died.

After the death of Pavlutsky intercourse with the Chukchi was broken off and was not renewed until 1789. The persuasions and gifts of Zashiversk were mainly instrumental in bringing this about.

The warlike spirit of the Chukchi was manifested not only against the Russians but against neighboring tribes, and especially against the Tánñit, which name, in the Chukchi language, designates the Koryaks as well as the Chuvanzi. Chukchi tradition is replete with accounts of these wars. The names of their most prominent heroes are still cherished, and many families boast of their descent from them. The principal leader in these hostilities was Lawtíliwadhlin ("Man-beckoning-with-a-nod," or "Man-with-a-bear's-neck"); his fellow champions were Amloo, Bone-face, Chímkil, Elénnut, Ajñfairhin, Tawe, Nankachhat, and others.

Lawtíliwadhlin is described as a "destroyer of homes." "At the sound of his voice the courage of the strongest fails, and women slay their children that they may not fall into his hands. His arrows fall like rain." Another warrior, Elénnut, towers above the multitude like a fir; his hands reach to his knees; his fists are like two large wooden bowls. He runs in bounds through the deep snow. Another warrior, Nankachhat, has a lance with a blade a yard in length. When the ice on Nomwaan river breaks up, he stretches himself across the water and dams the ice, while caravans pass over his body, etc.

Recent habitat.—During the last half-century, thanks to their friendly intercourse with the Russians, the Chukchi have been much less warlike and brutal, and, barring a few exceptions, they have not been at war with their neighbors. The spread of the Chukchi during the last fifty years through the tundra, westward and northward, caused by the great increase in their herds, has also tended toward their civilization. On the whole the Chukchi are virtually newcomers in the Kolyma district, although formerly the Russians came in contact with them on that river. At the beginning of the nineteenth century Baranikha river, 200 miles east of the Kolyma, was the western limit of Chukchi territory. From the second quarter of the century the reindeer Chukchi, as their herds increased, extended their range on the west and north, occupying the entire territory as far as the wooded area, and either driving the original inhabitants, the Lamut, farther into the woods or settling side by side with them.

Barter.—With the renewal of intercourse with the Chukchi, trade revived. Near the confines of the Chukchi territory a fair was held each spring in a small fort, and trade soon reached the large sum of 200,000 rubles (\$154,000) per year. From the first the high-priced American furs (foxes of the most valuable sort—"flame foxes," so called,—gray-neck foxes, beavers, and martens) were the most valuable imports. Russian goods were carried to the American coast and thence inland. The chief of these traders were the coast Chukchi, many of whom devoted their whole time to barter, going in the summer to America on their baydaras and in the winter journeying to the fair, with reindeers or dogs, on sledges. Trade is still carried on in this manner, and the costliest furs are taken by these merchants to the fairs of Anadyr and Anuy. Traffic was conducted between Asia and America before the coming of the Russians. The products of reindeer breeding were interchanged with those of maritime pursuits—ground-seal and walrus skins, and straps, seal-oil, whale-bone, etc. This traffic is now very considerable,

for all the tribes of the coast require reindeer-skins as well as clothing of this material.

The wandering Chukchi tradesmen, in their half-fabulous tales, vividly describe the insatiable longing for tobacco manifested by the most distant tribes. A typical account follows :

Far off, deep in the woods, live an invisible people—a specter folk—very rich in fox-skins. These people continually crave tobacco. Having reached their abiding place we cast toward the edge of the wood a small packet of tobacco which we always carry. Immediately the whole wood resounds with the cry “Tobacco ! Tobacco !” — but nobody can be seen. Specters flit on all sides with foxes in their hands and with large bags. The foxes are seen, but the people are invisible. Then we fling toward the wood our bags of tobacco, and shortly afterward the bags are flung back filled with foxes ; but still nobody can be seen.

Farther on live men who at will dis sever themselves. They stay among the trees on the shores of the lakes, cleft in halves, but at the slightest rustling their parts come together and they dive into the water.

They, too, have a longing for tobacco, and exchange large fish and otters for it. Then again in the woods exist men not larger than the forearm of a man. They subsist on trees and buy tobacco with the skins of the lynx and the muskrat. Then again there are shaggy people with the body of a polar bear but with the face of a man. These are the best of all, since for a little snuff from a tobacco pipe no larger than a nail, they will give a marten. And all men of that country, large and small, covet tobacco through all their lives.

During the last twenty-five years trade by American whalers in Asia and America has reduced the importation of American furs, the few that are now brought in going to Anadyr. Trade with the Chukchi on the Kolyma is now limited to the exchange of Russian tea, tobacco, and hardware for the products of local reindeer-breeding and for the furs obtained by the reindeer Chukchi of Kolyma. The yearly traffic at the Anuy spring fair now aggregates only 15,000 rubles.

Tribute to Russia.—During the eighteenth century many attempts were made to levy a tax on the Chukchi, in return for which the government agents have freely offered gifts which far exceeded in cost the whole amount of this *yassak*. About the

middle of the nineteenth century some 150 men paid tribute, consisting of a red or white fox-skin, each receiving in exchange tobacco and utensils of at least twice its value. In 1870, Baron von Maydell, governor of the Kolyma district, induced some of the reindeer Chukchi near the Kolyma to forego their importunities for gifts, in consequence of which the annual tribute was reduced to one ruble per adult man, amounting to 247 rubles from a population of 3000.

The other half of the reindeer Chukchi and the coast people pay no tribute, and are independent of their western neighbors. From the first the Russian authorities sought reliable and prominent men whom they could make chiefs; but their efforts were generally fruitless, as the Chukchi would not recognize such leaders. Old deeds in the archives of Kolyma mention several chieftains of this sort to whom their compatriots mockingly gave the surname *Yī'ñītcīn*, the "Long-nosed," i. e., those who poked their noses into affairs without authority.

Baron von Maydell, when imposing tribute on the reindeer Chukchi, conceived the idea of erecting a hierarchy, the head of which should assume the title of the so-called chief *toyon*¹ of the reindeer Chukchi and be known to the Russians as the Chukchi "king." This idea is now a subject of ridicule. In some years eight chieftains are elected; in others only three or four. Many people assessed by Maydell have since died, and their children refuse to pay the tribute. Since the *yassak* is very small, and inasmuch as the chieftains are usually selected by the authorities from the owners of the largest flocks, these chiefs ungrudgingly pay the tribute of those who refuse. Most of the money is paid by the men who live on the great tundra west of the Kolyma and in the mountains south of Omolon river, for this area has been occupied by Chukchi only a few years, and they consider the payment to be a tribute for their lands.

¹ A Turkish word for "lord" used throughout Siberia for the native chiefs.

Tribal divisions.—The Chukchi tribe may be divided into two groups—the reindeer Chukchi and the maritime Chukchi—together numbering some 15,000 according to the latest census by Mr Gondatti and myself. The Kolyma district contains not more than 3000 Chukchi, all of them possessing reindeer herds. The maritime Chukchi inhabit the Arctic coast from Cape Erri to East cape; on the Pacific coast they are intermixed with the Asiatic Eskimo.

Both branches of the Chukchi speak the same language, and although living quite differently are so intermixed as to be practically one people. Nevertheless, their folklore furnishes reason for supposing the existence of two tribal sources, unlike both in physical type and in culture, and which are represented as hostile to each other. One of the tribal nuclei appear to have been wanderers on the tundra and breeders of reindeer; the other settled on the coast which they navigated in long canoes quite unknown to the inlanders.

The Russian name Chukchi, or Chukchee, is derived from the Chukchi word *Cháwtcy*, which signifies “rich in reindeers.” The reindeer people assumed this name in contradistinction to the coast dwellers, who are called *Añkalît* (“Sea people”). Those who go back and forth between the coast villages and the camps of the reindeer-breeders are commonly called *Kavrálît* (“Rangers”). They are numerous and maintain control of the trade. The Russians generally call them Cape Chukchi, although most of them come from villages nearer than East cape. Usually the Chukchi call themselves simply *Oráwêtlat* (“Men”), or *Lé-oráwêtlat* (“Genuine men”), regarding all foreigners to be like devils (*ké'lat*).

Food.—The maritime Chukchi subsist by hunting sea-animals and by fishing. Notwithstanding the abundance of game and fish, their sustenance is far from assured, since they have to provide for their dogs, on which they depend for transportation, the same food as for themselves. A full team of twelve dogs

will consume twice as much food as an ordinary human family; besides, several puppies must be raised to take the place of the old or worn-out dogs. In addition to the food, there must also be obtained fuel for cooking it. This must be either seal or whale blubber, since all along the coast between Cape Erri and East cape driftwood is very scarce, and there is no standing timber. When the hunt has been successful, the maritime inhabitants, in the words of an ancient tale, "eat so much blubber that it trickles down both sides of their faces"; but when no game is taken the people often starve to death. The tales of the maritime Chukchi contain many direful details of such famines, which occur usually during heavy snowstorms when every living thing is deeply buried. Many of these tales relate how the inhabitants, having plenty when a storm began, afterward became short of provisions, and not being able to replenish the supply, famished. They first ate their dogs, then the skins, and finally began to gnaw their own hands.

The reindeer.—The greater part of the Chukchi gain their livelihood by reindeer-breeding, by which means existence is far less hazardous. There are many peculiarities of reindeer-breeding among the Chukchi not found elsewhere. Those about the dividing line of the continents have been more successful in reindeer-breeding, in point of numbers, than in all Asia; but in taming the reindeer they are far less successful than their neighbors, and their herds can scarcely be called domestic animals, since they are very shy and on the slightest provocation become 'as wild as any untamed beasts. Their hedging of half-wild reindeer is the same as that adopted preliminary to breeding any kind of cattle. The Chukchi herdsman must give his entire attention to keeping his flocks together. If he should become overworked and relax his attention, the flock will go astray, and after a few days of independence they become lost forever. There have been cases in which herdsmen fell asleep near their herds and on awaking could find no trace of them. I was informed of a family on

Chaun river, who in a single summer lost nearly all their animals, and in despair took their own lives.

In the summer of 1895, on the shore of the small river Molónđa, in the Stanovoi mountains, we tended the herd of Sava, one of the wealthiest young reindeer herdsmen in that section. The animals were very restless; nearly every week half the flock would wander off, usually to the opposite side of the river. We could not follow them thither as the Molónđa has a swift current, and at that time the stream was very high. The Lamut swam to the opposite bank on the back of a tall, gaunt courser, but when one of our herders, E'tuwhi, a heavy-weight, tried to follow, he was thrown in midstream and saved only with difficulty.

Every summer the reindeer Chukchi, in order that their herds may not become infested with insects, cross the tundra to the coast, where the ice-floes, drifted thither by the north winds, make the air cool. Others go inland to the glaciers near the sources of the small rivers. Early in autumn most of the herdsmen return with their herds to the shelter of the woods. The extent of these wanderings is not very great—only from 150 to 200 miles—but the Chukchi travel slowly and make frequent stops, so that these trips consume nearly nine months of the year. In summer all travel is suspended, the Chukchi reindeer being too small and weak to be used; therefore, as the large herds require frequent change of pasture, the herdsmen, as soon as the camp is settled for the season and a number of bucks sufficient for the needs of the family have been killed, drive their herds to pasture and wander with the reindeer for three months, without huts or other shelter, carrying their provisions and spare clothing on their backs, and living practically the same life as their animals. Every two or three weeks they return to their families to see that they are not in need of food, and in case of want they will carry to camp, on their own shoulders, the freshly-slaughtered animals. They could not drive their herds close to the camp in summer, since the

neighboring pasture lands must be kept for the August holidays. These cover several days, when many animals are slain, and the winter clothing is made from the reindeer-skins. Sometimes in midsummer, when the herds wander far, the people in camp are obliged to live for several days on berries, roots, leaves, and the like, mixed with stale reindeer blood, and often suffer hunger. The herdsmen kill few animals for their own use, as it is difficult to transport the meat ; besides, in early summer the skins are too thin and full of holes to be of service.

Every summer a hoof-swelling malady ravages the flocks, and this is another reason why the herdsmen, knowing their herds will be decimated, are loath to slaughter them. To appease their hunger they suck the milk from the cows, or chip off a part of the new antlers of an old, heavy-headed buck, eating the thick gristle full of blood and covered with hair, which must be singed. Notwithstanding their scant diet, the herdsmen must exercise the utmost vigilance, sleeping but little for days at a time, as the reindeer-fly makes the reindeer restless and persistent in their efforts to get away.

During the dry, hot summer the strongest men become thin and weak ; their eyes are inflamed, and the skin of their faces is burned almost like leather. The Chukchi know of no remedy for the maladies with which the reindeer become afflicted. They skin the carcasses and carry the flesh to camp when not too far. By reason of the scarcity of wood on the tundra, they build no pens or fences for their herds, but have to run about constantly after the fashion of a common shepherd dog.

On the whole their half-wild animals make but indifferent teams. Those bred by the Lamut usually command a double price, which is willingly paid by the Chukchi. If the reindeer herds of the Chukchi are increasing, it is due to constant exertion in keeping them together and to their frugality in the use of the flesh. The Chukchi housewife knows better than the women of the neighboring tribes how to obtain from a carcass the most

nutritious parts. The flesh and blood, the rims of the horns and hoofs, the gristle of the ears and nostrils are all consumed, raw or cooked. The half-digested moss taken from the paunch is cooked with fat and roots as a porridge; the bones are boiled to extract the marrow, and the remainder is used for feeding the dogs.

The Lamut hunters and the Russo-Yukagir fishermen on the Kolyma are not so provident. When they have plenty of food they waste much of it and indulge in excesses with no heed for the future. The Chukchi pabulum also includes many edible roots, leaves, and vegetable products not raised by neighboring tribes. I once met in the camp of Kêñukêda, a wealthy reindeer-breeder, some Russian fishermen who had come from a neighboring village to buy reindeer. The host had just returned from his herd, and instead of meat he was given to eat porridge made from willow-root bark cooked with sour liver from the summer supplies. The Russians regarded the repast with obvious disgust. At last one of them sneered: "Ah, Kêñukêda, you must have a capacious throat; even the wood slips down!"

"Aye!" answered Kêñukêda, quite unaffectedly, "my throat is indeed large, but I don't need to come to you for food!"

Physical characteristics.—Regarding the physical type of the Chukchi, without the presentation of anthropometric data at this time, it is possible to make only the following general remarks:

The Chukchi, as a rule, are tall and well built, especially when compared with their nearest neighbors, the lean and under-sized Lamut. Their cheekbones are much less prominent than those of the Tungus or Yakut, and the nose is smaller. Their eyes are brown in color, straight, and are frequently as large as those of the white race. Their hair is black and sometimes wavy, or indeed curly, a characteristic which I never found among the Lamut, and only among the Yakut of pure blood. It becomes gray much later in life than among the Caucasians. The beard is scanty, but is seen more frequently than among the Lamut or the Yakut. The eyebrows are often thick and shaggy, especially among the old men.

In this connection I would say that one of the requisites for beauty in a woman is heavy eyebrows.

The gray, sallow color of the skin of the face, common among the Lamut and Yukagir, is seldom seen among the Chukchi. This may be due to the superior diet of the latter. The color of the face is bronze, with intermediate tints varying from brick-red to blood-red. The ideal of beauty in both males and females requires the face to be as "red as blood, burning like fire." The color of the skin of the body is generally scarcely distinguishable from that of the Caucasian; however, there are numerous cases of brown or even of dark bronze skins.

Many Chukchi faces are rather clumsy in outline, with forehead low and straight, skull flattened, lower jaw massive, and the lower part of the face disproportionately large and strong; therefore a handsome head is frequently compared to a round, mossy hillock. One of the marks of superiority is the ability to eat quickly. "When the young men eat quickly the old men look on with pleasure," says the proverb. Faces strongly Mongol in outline are more frequent among the women, though many of them are as fair and well shaped as any woman of the white race.

Health. — The Chukchi are the healthiest of the tribes of the Kolyma country. Their women are free from that form of arctic hysteria which besets almost all Yukagir and Lamut women. Of contagious diseases, now, as formerly, the most dreaded is smallpox, which in 1884 destroyed more than one-third of the population. Some forty years ago syphilis, too, was much dreaded. The Chukchi regard it as indigenous, though its name, *átal-váirghín*, suggests the name of a tribe (*Átal*, Russian, Chuvanzi) who were mediators between the Russians and the Chukchi. However this may be, one afflicted with syphilis was regarded as an outcast. At home he was provided with bedding of his own, a separate dish and bowl, and was kept aloof lest others should contract the disease. Nowadays, since the decrease of the disease, these precautions are not maintained.

Another contagious disease, somewhat akin to influenza, now and then spreads through the country, from the Russian villages eastward, carrying away scores.

In spite of all this the reindeer Chukchi have increased steadily during the last half-century. Their families are large, one mother often having as many as ten children. The men live to old age, and often a white-haired man has a young bride with whom he rears a large family. These wild tribes are like squirrels in the wood or foxes on the tundra; they thrive and increase until ravaged by hunger or disease.

Mental character.—Opinions as to the mental character of the Chukchi vary according to the personality of the observer. To me their most conspicuous trait is their irascibility, of which they themselves are not unconscious.

“I am a tundra wanderer!” one of my Chukchi acquaintances, named Nhîrô’n, would say to me. “My anger rises suddenly; it comes and goes of its own will.”

The Chukchi in anger growls and shows his teeth, and even threateningly bites his sleeve or the handle of his knife, as if defying his foe. Some of them, when angered, shed tears and tear their hair like unruly children, and, when unable to take revenge, even commit suicide. They resent any assertion of authority against their will. This aversion to submission constantly breaks out in the family and among the clan-ties—even wives against their husbands and children against their parents. In the time of the wars with the Russians it impelled captives to take their own lives and made the free willing, in case of defeat, to leave their own country and emigrate to America.

Sophiology.—The Chukchi have a wealth of folklore and tradition, some of their tales being so long as to consume a whole night in the telling. In their own way they are eloquent. The character of their folklore is quite different from that of some of the Ural-Altaic people, and, in common with the folklore of the Yukagir, Kamchadal, and probably also the Koryak, presents

many points of resemblance to that of North America, especially of the North Pacific coast tribes. A collection of about one hundred and ninety of my Chukchi tales is now being printed by the Academy of Sciences of St Petersburg, hence I can only barely allude to the subject here. For instance, in the cosmogonic legends the raven acts the same part as in North American lore. He is the creator of the world and of man; he brings light—the sun, the moon, and the stars,—he makes lakes and rivers, and inhabits the earth with animals, etc. After his work is done he becomes a thunder-bird and lives in the sky surrounded by clouds.

Some of the Eskimo tales in Rink's collection are also known among the Chukchi. This is not surprising, since the latter are fond of the tales of other people, and have appropriated many Russian stories, adapting them, not without skill, to their own mode of life. I have listened to tales purporting to have been of American origin, as if they had been learned from American whalers, although I could not have told as much from their theme.

Like many primitive tribes, the Chukchi have developed a system of rites much more fully than that of creeds. The holidays of the reindeer Chukchi form a complete cycle, beginning with the autumnal feast of "slaying the thin-haired reindeer" and ending late in the spring with the "feast of antlers." All these feasts are accompanied with offerings in the form of sacrifice of reindeer, dogs, and small symbolic figures made of tallow, pounded meat, ground edible leaves, and even of snow and clay, all of which are regarded as substitutes for the real animal. Besides fat, flesh, and blood in the uncooked state, women prepare for sacrifice a porridge of blood mixed with fat and various edible roots. This is one of the most savory dishes prepared by the Chukchi.

In addition to the above, the following rites and sacrifices are included in the cycle:

1. *Enankadwkwurghîn*, feeding (of the hearth).
2. *Enattc'i'irghîn*, a ceremony of thanksgiving over the larger animals killed in hunting.

3. *Enapyerdtirghin*, commemorative of the dead.
4. Rites performed in accordance with a vow. Of these there are two groups: (a) *Mnhē'irghin*, ceremonials by vow; (b) *Erdtirghin*, racing for a prize.

The last two classes are the most important, since they are regarded as a safeguard against supernatural evils, and are arranged by promise, or under the influence of some dream, or at the behest of a shaman having the gift of prophecy. *Mnhē'irghin* is a particular kind of sacrifice, accompanied by drumming, ritualistic singing, dancing, etc. Sledge-racing is likewise attended with sacrifices and also has a ritualistic meaning. Racing is a social festival which attracts the whole population of the nearest camps, and is accompanied with foot-running for prizes, wrestling, and other feats.

Mortuary customs.—The mortuary rites of the Chukchi are of great interest. In disposing of their dead they either burn them or leave them in the open field wrapped in large slices of reindeer flesh. The manner is regulated by family tradition, which descends from father to son. Soon after death the body is stripped, placed in the inner sleeping-room, and carefully covered with reindeer-skins, since it is thought to be a sin "to show any part of the corpse to the sun or to a strange eye." One of the nearest relations of the deceased must pass the first night in the sleeping-room, watching the body. In the morning four other relations come to dress, before doing which they share with the dead the last meal. It was once my lot to share a meal of this sort in a room so narrow that we had scarcely room to sit with the corpse. For lack of space we put our dinner-board on the dead man, placing thereon our cups, teapots, and trays laden with meat. We sat leaning our elbows over the body, and since I was at the upper end, my elbow was directly over the head. In the board against the mouth they cut a hole, and on me devolved the duty of feeding the dead, pouring hot tea into the hole and slipping through it morsels of tallow. When the meal was finished, all

the men stripped themselves to their inner skin shirt ; then raising the corpse slightly, they thrust their bare feet under the nude body, and, resting it on their crossed legs, began to put on it new clothes made for the purpose. When the corpse was dressed, the face was covered with the hood of the outer cloak which, tied with a freshly-cut thong, was wound around the whole body from the head downward. They then pushed the corpse out to begin the divination.

This divination is performed by near relations of the deceased with the aid of the staff or of the crooked wand of horn used for beating the snow from fur clothing. The staff or wand is tied to the thong binding the head, and the divinator, holding with his hands the opposite point, asks a question and strives to lift the body. If the answer is in the negative, the corpse is supposed not to allow its head to be lifted ; if, on the contrary, the answer is an affirmative one, the head is lifted without effort. In this manner the dead is questioned as to the spot where it desires to be placed, about the leader of the funeral procession, the reindeer-team for its funeral sledge, etc. In the same way it is questioned about the future of those living, about the diseases likely to attack them, and as to their success in hunting, trading, etc. After the divination the corpse is tied lengthwise on the sledge, a reindeer team is harnessed, and the leader sits astride the body, taking the reins in his hands.

The Chukchi sledge must be used with the legs dangling on both sides. When the place of deposit is reached the reindeer are slain. Some of the followers untie the corpse and place it on the spot designated, while others cut off the reindeer flesh in thin, broad slices. When enough flesh has been cut off, they begin to cut the clothes of the dead, exchanging for every piece a slice of flesh until the body is entirely covered with it. Then the nearest kinsman cuts the throat and opens the breast in order to lay bare a part of the heart and the liver. This operation is performed with gloved hands, since the dead body is reputed to be unclean

and must not be touched with bare hands. The corpse is then left to the ravages of wolves and foxes; and the sooner it is consumed the better it is supposed to be for those living.

When burning is resorted to the corpse need not be covered with reindeer flesh, but is put on the pile with the clothes on and tied around with the thong. On the tundra, when there is no standing timber within reach and driftwood is scarce, the sledges and tent-poles are sometimes cut up for the pyre.

Divination.—Divination for deciding as to the moving of a camp and herd, and for undertaking journeys, is frequently effected by a burnt reindeer shoulder-blade, or by suspending the thing most often used. When the object hung is heavy, it is let down on the ground and the answers of the oracle are interpreted as in the ceremony for the dead: when the answer is negative, the article cannot be lifted; when it is in the affirmative, it is easily lifted. In divination with a light object it is held up, and when the article remains still the answer is in the negative, but should it swing, the answer is affirmative.

A feature of all rites is the so-called *éló'tko-váirghín* ("the exercise on the drum"), which is in the nature of shamanistic practice and gives weight to the idea that this or that individual has shamanistic power. Every one, male and female alike, has the right, and on some holidays is duty bound to share in this exercise on the drum. The exercises are accompanied with the ritual dance and the singing of airs, some of which are inherited while others are composed for the occasion or improvised.

Sacred objects.—The idea of sacredness attached to the hearth and to many household implements, such as wooden fire-making tools rudely carved in the form of idols (*ghí'rghir*), and to small wooden amulets (*táinikwut*), originated in their system of rites. Family drums are also sacred; they descend by inheritance and must not be given to strangers; they are supposed to protect the well-being of the family, and play a part in all rites and on all holidays. In the principal yearly feast—the slaying of the thin-

haired reindeer—the ceremony is accompanied by anointing the reindeer with the blood of sacrifice. In this ceremony all the family paint their faces with certain inherited signs which are different for each family.

Taboo.—Every family is hampered by prohibitions, the most important being the taboo of interchange of fire (even of partly burnt fuel), which causes much inconvenience on the cold and timberless tundra. It is worthy of note, however, that no such taboo is recognized in their relations with neighboring peoples. The fire of a Russian neighbor or guest, for instance, may be borrowed by any Chukchi without fear. In personal intercourse, such as lighting a pipe, a Chukchi may freely use fire obtained from matches or by flint-and-steel. Only the sacred household fire, obtained from wooden fire-making implements, and which is indispensable at feasts and on holidays, must be absolutely free from contact with another fire derived from similar means.

Generally the fire of a strange family is regarded as infectious and as harboring evil spirits. Fear of pollution extends also to all objects belonging to a strange hearth, to the skins of the tent and the sleeping-room, and even to the keepers and worshippers of strange penates. The Chukchi from far inland, who travel but little, when they come to a strange territory fear to sleep in tents or to eat meat cooked on a strange fire, preferring to sleep in the open air and to subsist on their own scant food supply. On the other hand, an unknown traveler, coming unexpectedly to a Chukchi camp, can hardly gain admittance to a tent, as I myself have experienced.

Animism and spiritism.—Many details of the rites and feasts vary in different families, and are performed with the utmost care and secrecy. The animistic conception of the outer world is generally recognized. All objects retaining their natural properties and much of their natural shape, but assuming also the shape of human beings, are thought to possess animate power. Thus the personified "People of Wood" (*Ūtti-ré'mkin*) fear the fire, for it

could burn them; while the "Tallow People" live on the bottom of the stone lamp, etc. This concept coincides with the Yukagir notion of indwelling spirits ("owners"), resembling human beings, filling the outer world. Such, for example, are the owners of the woods, the rivers, the mountains, etc.

The conception of evil spirits (*ké'lat*), wandering unseen about the earth, is also extensively developed; all misfortunes and maladies, even death, are ascribed to them. They come from under the ground, or from the extreme limits of the Chukchi country, for the sole purpose of harming men, and having accomplished their purpose they pass on. Sacrifices are rarely made to them, except by wicked shamans. Protection against these evil spirits can be gained only from right-minded shamans, who can foretell their attacks and advise measures for rendering them ineffective.

The *ké'lat*, when attacking man, first tries to get his soul and eat it. Every man has from five to six souls, or even more. These souls (*uvî'rît*) are very small—not larger than a gnat. Everybody can lose one or even two of the *uvî'rît* without endangering his health, but if he loses too many, illness ensues. On the other hand the shaman can cure a man who has lost all his souls by blowing into him some part of his own spirit or by replacing the soul with any of the *ké'lat* dependent on himself.

The conception of a general divine force is very indefinite and is termed *Nhârhînên* (World), *Ué'ubechu-wâîrghîn* (Merciful Being), *Tinântumghî* (Creator), etc. The Creator is represented as living on top of the sky. Some traditions give him the name of the "Owner-of-the-star-with-the-stuck-snake" (*Unp-é'ñér*), a term applied generally throughout Asia to the polar star, signifying that it is fixed and in the middle of the sky.

Shamanism.—Sexual transformation.—Shamanistic powers are conferred at maturity. A young man, not having before shown any sign of singularity, suddenly becomes pensive; he may pass days and nights in the open air far from home, or, on the contrary,

he may sleep in the sleeping-room without ever going out. He refuses food and intercourse with men, and answers no questions. This critical condition, believed to be caused by the onset of the spirits on their chosen man, often ends in the sickness or death of the man "doomed to being shaman." The only means to be resorted to for recovery are drum-practice, performed by the "new-inspired" uninterruptedly for several weeks, together with singing and attempts at ventriloquism.

Then the young man doomed to sexual transformation receives a message to that effect from his spirits, and must at once don women's clothes, acquire a woman's voice, learn to perform women's work, and forget his former masculine knowledge. He must become very bashful, and, like a young girl, ashamed to look a stranger in the face. After this transformation he, or "she," looks about for a lover, in which she is aided by her protecting spirits, who cause the hearts of the young men to be drawn to her and inspire them with the passion of love. After a while the transformed is married, and lives during the rest of her life in the wedded state, performing of her own accord the duties of housewife. Such full transformations are not numerous. In a tribe of 2000 men I heard of only five cases. Instances of partial transformation, whereby the man, assuming female clothing and speech still can have a wife and beget children, are more numerous. Instances of the transformation of women into men are more rare.

All other Chukchi shamans may be divided into three groups. The first includes ventriloquists, who perform many tricks similar to those of spiritism. Implicit faith is not placed in all their arts, many of which are looked upon as mere amusements. The second group, the medicine-men ("knowing ones"), seek the destruction of the evil spell, or, on the contrary, its consummation. The third group, consisting of the prophets, occupy themselves with divination. These groups, however, are not clearly defined, for a shaman skilled in the practices of one has generally a knowledge of the others.

Chukchi shamans use the common family drum and wear ordinary clothes, sometimes crudely ornamented along the skirt and around the wrists with many amulets and thickly-sewn fringe. They perform their tasks in utter darkness, in the inner sleeping-room and in an almost naked condition. The shaman sits in the place of honor in the left inner corner, but is cramped for space since the room is small. The performance consists of a series of all sorts of sounds, the performer, by deflecting the sound, producing strange effects with his drum, and throwing his voice, with varying force, in all directions. The sounds rush through the room like a storm. The spirits talk on all sides; they quarrel among themselves and attack the shaman and the assistants. Once in a performance of this sort, Kôpô'whê, the celebrated shaman of Anuy river, made the spirits, at my request, speak close to my ear, and the illusion was so complete that I involuntarily held up my hand to catch the voice. These spirits, coming at the call of shamans, have the name of *kê'lat*, but are not the same as the evil *kê'lat*—the malady-makers. These *kê'lat* are not harmful; they represent objects in nature, taking their names, as *Îlwî'lu-kê'la* (Wild-reindeer spirit), *Nhaw-ri'rka-kê'la* (She-walrus spirit), *Ché'yvulégay* (the Walking One, i. e., the Bear), *Iwchuwghî* (the Long One, i. e., the Needle), *Pîlvî'nte-pnâwkwun* (the File), etc.

The shamanistic songs are varied and have some beauty, though they sound oddly to a European. A shaman will sing and drum for several hours without sign of fatigue, as if he were buoyed up by the spirits who sang and performed in his stead.

Astronomic lore.—Many tales are associated with the Chukchi constellations: Arcturus and Vega are named "two brother heads," the foremost head and the hindmost head. They wander over the sky, following each other with a long row of loaded sledges. The foremost head is called "the herd of the stars" and "the herd of the upper reindeer flocks." Orion is an archer (*Chulté'nin*), aiming with his bow at a group of women.

(Pleiads), each of whom refuses to marry him, on account of the size of his virile member, which is represented by three stars extending downward. Chulté'nnin has another wife (Leo), but they quarreled and she struck him with a tailoring board, causing his back to become crooked; therefore he repulsed the woman, who, being tired, fell asleep in the middle of the sky, her head resting on her right sleeve. Aldebaran is an arrow of the Chulté'nnin stuck in the bog represented by numerous small stars. The Milky Way is a river with sandy banks and many isles; in the middle of it stand five wild reindeer bucks (Cassiopeia). Ursa Major represents six warriors armed with slings, the seventh double star being a gray fox gnawing a pair of reindeer antlers. Corona Borealis is a polar-bear's paw. Shooting stars are said to slide down ice-hills. Comets are called "smoking stars," the smoke indicating that much cooking is being done.

The Chukchi have eight seasons in their year, twenty points of the compass, and three shortest days in winter.

Social organization.—Among these people the strongest social relation is the family tie, which is broadened to include the clan. Nearest male relations form a union pledged to assist one another. This union is cemented by the community of fire, by consanguinity (which is admitted for the male side), by the identity of the signs painted on the face with the blood of sacrifice, and by hereditary ritual songs.

Members of the same kin roam over the same territory and maintain intercourse between themselves. If one loses his herd, richer kinsmen will replenish his stock. Marriages are usually restricted to their own kindred. Journeys to Russian block-houses or trips to the seaboard for purposes of trade are undertaken by one or more members, who take with them skins and furs for which they trade tobacco, hardware, walrus skins, and ground-seal thongs. These articles are divided among the kindred according to the respective number of skins traded, but whenever any one is without tobacco or thongs, he can take from

those who have them. An offense committed against any member of the kindred is speedily avenged. A Chukchi proverb says: "A man rich in brothers is prone to violence; the brotherless is timid." However, this close tie is kept up only by cousins; the third generation is bound much more loosely, and after removal to another territory the bond is soon forgotten. The hereditary songs change so much as to be finally unrecognizable; the "halves of the same fire," burning apart and in a different environment become estranged, having to feed on different fuel, and forming a "smell and a breath of their own."

The union of Chukchi kinsfolk has no chiefs, no settled meetings, nor any organization. The kinsmen usually meet at the reindeer races, which are arranged at brief intervals by each man in turn. If there be some question of common concern it is talked over, although it is not always settled.

Marriage.—Marriage is contracted in different ways. Unions of couples closely related by blood are very common, and the bond is regarded as stronger than when the pair are not consanguineally related. In such cases no payment is made for the bride, but the family of the latter have a right to expect an equivalent from the groom's family, should they need it later. Children are often reared together with a view of future marriage. They sleep together from the beginning, and the marriage is consummated on the first impulse of nature, or even before maturity of either party. Such marriages are considered to be the strongest.

Another form of marriage is concluded between persons belonging to different family groups. In former times such a marriage required one of the parties to enter the family of the other, leaving forever his own kindred. Latterly, the length of this desertion has been restricted to one or two years, during which time the bridegroom must serve the family of the bride, his service being counted as ransom paid for the woman. A young man thus serving his father-in-law, as Jacob served Laban, has to perform all kinds of rough and hard work, and is usually tested by

various trials before the family of the bride allows him to lead her away. Rich families who, having many young women whom they are unwilling to give to strangers, generally select poor young men. These, having stood the test, are admitted to the bride and become members of the family by the performance of certain rites.

These latter forms of marriage are not very binding. The parents and brothers of the woman given away to the stranger reserve the right to take her back even after the lapse of years. I knew of a Chukchi, named Nhîrô'n, who was young but poor and profligate, and who gave his sister to another Chukchi, Ankánukwat, son of Táto. Instead of the required time of service, the bridegroom came to his brother-in-law, bringing his own large flock. He lived with his brother-in-law two years, during which time Nhîrô'n and his wife fed from the flock and squandered all that he could obtain, selling young and old bucks to the Russians, or gambling them away. At the end of the second year, Ankánukwat, whose patience was nearly exhausted, wandered off. For two years more Nhîrô'n profited from the same source, taking now a team, now skins to sell, or young animals to slaughter. Finally, Ankánukwat utterly lost patience and refused his brother-in-law's demands, whereupon the latter, having been playing cards for three days, went at once to Ankánukwat's camp and took his sister away, though she had been Ankánukwat's wife for four years. The husband did not care to quarrel, especially as he had no children; but pitying his wife, he followed her to Nhîrô'n's place and stayed there a week or two, hoping Nhîrô'n would relent. The latter, however, requested Ankánukwat to rejoin his camp, and not knowing what to do, Ankánukwat took counsel of his father. Meanwhile, Nhîrô'n took a hand at cards with a friend, and the divorce contest came to an unexpected conclusion. One of Nhîrô'n's neighbors, Mēwēt, having an old score to settle, came to the camp in Nhîrô'n's absence, and led the young woman, nothing loath, to his own home. Nhîrô'n was so enraged when he learned

of this that he immediately, at night and in a severe snow-storm, sought an encounter with his enemy. Two months later, when I was again in the vicinity, I found him with his family living at his new brother-in-law's and dissipating his large flock as well.

In the case of accepting a poor young man into the family, there have been instances where the father-in-law, becoming displeased, has suddenly sent the son away, although he may have been in the enjoyment of his nuptial rights for several years. In one such case the young man, rather than leave his wife, took both her life and his own.

Marriage by interchange is observed mostly between first and second cousins. Males entering into this bond acquire the mutual right to the wives of one another, a right which can be claimed at every meeting. Nowadays marriage by interchange can be contracted between unrelated parties—even with people of foreign tribes with whom close friendship has sprung up. A bachelor and a widower living in the same camp with a married man can form a like contract. This style of marriage is only a system of polyandry. Sometimes more than ten people may be affected by marriage through interchange within one group, although three or four are regarded as sufficient. Women generally are not averse to the custom; even Russian women married to the Chukchi of the tundra submit to the interchange method without protest, while, on the contrary, Chukchi women have been known to take their lives rather than submit to the demands of other men, even with their husbands' consent.

Chastity is not highly regarded. The Chukchi language has no distinctive term for "maiden," the word *yánvínhdýé*, which is usually employed, referring to any woman without a husband, including widows and divorced women.

Polygamy is common, but the polygamist is generally contented with two wives, although the Chukchi chief Ēyhēlī, previously referred to, had four living wives besides four who were deceased. A rich Chukchi on Anuy river had seven wives; and

other examples might be mentioned. The first wife is held in greater esteem than the others and is termed the "elder wife" (*pēnin nhēw*). The second wife can expect to win the favor of her husband only after she has given him several healthy children.

The reasons for polygamy differ in different cases. When an elder wife is childless, a second wife may be taken for the sake of offspring; or when the first wife loses vigor and has no grown daughters, the man may take a younger wife to assist in the household duties. Sometimes the second wife is taken at the request of the first, while at other times the second wife is regarded as a rival. When a rich man has two wives he usually divides his flock and makes for each wife a tent and provides for her support. The poor man lives with his two wives in one small tent.

Chukchi men have no hesitancy in marrying stranger women—Russian, Lamut, and Tungusian,—paying for them high prices. In cases of marriages within the tribe no price is paid in skins, deer, or other valuables, and they ridicule their neighbors "who take payment for a girl as for a reindeer cow."

The marriage rite is very simple. Its chief feature consists of anointing with the blood of a reindeer slain for the purpose. The bride and bridegroom, with other members of his family, paint on her face the hereditary signs of her new family by which she casts off her old family gods and assumes the new ones. When the bridegroom is taken to the family of his father-in-law, his family totem marks and gods are discarded and he paints on his face the totem of the family to which he will henceforth belong.

Status of women.—The status of women is rather low. They must perform much hard and dirty work, for nearly all domestic occupations—the preparation of food, making of clothing, pitching and striking of the tent, and the bringing of wood—are undertaken by them; besides, the younger women, if not burdened with an infant, help their husbands to herd the flocks.

According to a Chukchi saying, "Woman is more thrifty than man in three particulars — getting children, preparing food, and watching the flocks."

In camp women prepare and serve the men their daily meals, while for themselves they are contented with the leavings. During the evening the women are busy in the outer room while the men idle away the time in the sleeping-room awaiting supper. The housewife comes inside only after the meal is over and in order to put away the dishes. Then she can go to bed.

Children.—The Chukchi families are rich in children, of whom the parents are very fond. When ten years of age the boy, and often the girl, are sent to watch the flocks. Half-grown boys are kept very strictly; they are badly and scantily fed, are not always allowed to sleep in the tent, and are compelled to do the larger part of the herding. Meanwhile the father has more leisure and visits the flock only in bad weather or in the mosquito season, when the reindeer become restless.

Treatment of the aged.—Voluntary death.—The custom of putting to death the aged and sick is due to the hard conditions of life in the arctic wilderness. It is also a part of the Chukchi system of ethics. The old and sick consider death a right, not a duty, and often claim this right notwithstanding the opposition of their kinsmen. The custom of voluntary death sometimes passes by inheritance, though it is not held to be irrevocable. If once a man expresses a desire to die in such manner, he has no right to turn back on account of the trouble that his change of mind may bring to his family. Such a man is considered to be a victim of the *ké'lat*, and no man has the right to take from them a promised sacrifice. For instance, if a herdsman, angered at his flocks for their restlessness, should say to them, "Let the wolves eat you," as is usual with the reindeer Chukchi, he is considered to have promised his entire flock to the *ké'lat*, to whom the wolves are said to be akin, and the promise must be redeemed by slaying several of his best animals.

Survival of vassalage.—Young members of poor families, usually from other tribes, help wealthy Chukchi reindeer-owners to herd their flocks, receiving in return food, clothing, and gifts of living animals. The conditions of such an agreement are uniformly fixed. The newcomer generally brings with him or obtains on the spot his tent, which is kept in order by his wife, mother, or sister, for without a woman's aid no genuine herder can long exist; he also brings or acquires a few team reindeer for transporting his domestic goods. The poor "neighbor-mate" (*n̄mtumgh̄n*) is now simply a workman (*chawchuwdamō'ln*), whereas in former times his first duty was to defend against hostile attacks, thus supporting what may be regarded as a system of vassalage. According to tradition there were formerly bondmen and bondwomen, acquired through captivity or by purchase. Now there are no slaves, but it is not unusual to hear people taunted on account of their descent from Koryak or Eskimo boys. But on the whole this "neighborhood tie" was never so strong that the bond could not be severed when occasion demanded.

Crime.—Murder or infringement upon rights and property is punished by vendetta, but if the wrong is done within the limits of the family, outsiders have no right to interfere. Thus crimes against near kinsmen, which are by no means rare among the Chukchi, remain unavenged. "We have done it among ourselves" was regarded as a sufficient explanation when Yí'keti and Kóta cut their father's throat while in camp near Cape Erri in 1895. In the summer of 1896, on Poplar river, southward from the Little Anuy, in the Kolyma country, a young man killed his brother in order to get possession of his flock. The murderer, with his accomplice, named Kōnti'irgh̄n, and their victim, arranged a contest of springing over a barrier, the loser to pay his fine by making several springs with his feet bound together. When the elder brother lost, the murderer and his accomplice performed their foul deed. The fratricide took the flock and went unpunished. Kōnti'irgh̄n related this story to me in the midst of a

group of listeners gathered in the tent of a wealthy and respectable reindeer-breeder named *Lame* (Ghaghánto). Here *Kôntí'irghîn* lived as an aspirant for *Lame's* elder daughter. None of the listeners showed any signs of disapprobation, but on the morrow, when one of the sons of *Ghaghánto* let his knife fall in *Kôntí'irghîn's* presence, my fellow traveler, pointing out the young man, shouted: "Don't let your knife fall near him; he will seize it and kill you as he did another!" *Kôntí'irghîn* reddened but made no reply. *Ghaghánto* afterward told me in confidence that *Kôntí'irghîn* had no reason to remain longer in his camp, since he did not desire a murderer for a son-in-law; but even then I was not sure whether the cunning old man was sincere in his disapproval or whether he was trying to appear civilized.

The vendetta can be bought off with sufficient ransom. In the spring of 1895, when, during a brawl at the *Anuy* fair, a *Chukchi* was killed, a kinsman in my presence insisted that one of the *Cossacks* participating in the murder should be given to them to take care of the wife and children of the deceased. In former times a man taken as ransom would be enslaved, at least for a time; but in this case the *Cossack* was bought off with brick-tea, tobacco, and sugar. Nevertheless, the *Chukchi* made wry faces, and we feared they would attack our small wooden fort. Most of the people were concerned with trade rather than with the life of an individual, so the fair went on and ended in the usual way. Six months later, however, when traveling along *Wolverine* river, in the country of the upper *Anuy*, I was compelled to face the ill-will of people with whom I had been on friendly terms for two years, and to the very last some of my followers were robbed and we nearly came to blows on account of this difficulty.